

Special Education Advisory Committee Meeting (SEAC)

June 9, 2025

Leadership Report

SPECIAL EDUCATION IN THE TDSB

Louise Sirisko, Associate Director, Learning Innovation and Equitable Outcomes

Nandy Palmer, Executive Superintendent, Special Education Programs and Equitable Outcomes

Agenda

1. 7:00 – 7:05 pm Call to Order

- Land Acknowledgement
- Review/Approval of Agenda
- Declarations of Possible Conflicts of Interest
- Approval of minutes (May)

2. 7:05 – 7:10 pm

- Delegation

3. 7:10 – 7:15 pm

- Delegation

4. 7:15 – 7:25 pm

- Chair Report

5. 7:25 – 8:00 pm

- Staffing

6. 8:00 – 8:35 pm

- Exclusions

7. 8:35 – 8:45 pm

- Leadership Report

8. 8:35 – 9:00 pm

- Other Reports
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Land Acknowledgement

We acknowledge we reside on the lands of the Mississaugas of the Anishinaabe, the Haudenosaunee Confederacy and the Wendat. We also recognise the enduring presence of all First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples, as well as the importance of establishing and maintaining Cultural Safety through learning from Indigenous Peoples and Perspectives.



June Learning Sessions for Staff and Families

- Learning and engagement sessions continue to be made available for both staff and families, providing valuable opportunities to explore inclusive and anti-ableist practices and implement concrete strategies in the classroom and at home. These sessions are designed to support student achievement and well-being.

[June Learning Sessions](#)

June Newsletter for Families

- The Special Education and Inclusion Department is pleased to share the [June 2025 Parent/Guardian Special Education and Inclusion Newsletter](#). All newsletters for parents/guardians/caregivers (PDF and accessible Word) can be found on the [external TDSB site](#). These newsletters provide valuable and updated information related to Special Education and Inclusion for families.

[June 2025 Special Education and Inclusion Parent/Guardian Newsletter](#)
[External TDSB site](#)

Parent/Guardian/Caregiver Webinar Session #3

- On May 28 and 29, Special Education and Inclusion hosted a third parent engagement session for parents, guardians, and caregivers, focusing on strategies and resources to support students with ADHD. The sessions drew a total of 357 attendees - 163 on May 28 and 194 on May 29. Of the attendees who completed the survey 76% rated the session a 4 or 5 out of 5 in terms of usefulness, and the majority of attendees felt better informed about how to support and access support for their children with ADHD.
- Topics included: an overview of ADHD, common challenges experienced at home, practical tips for supporting children with ADHD, strategies for caregiver self-care, guidance on when to seek additional support, and available community and school-based resources. The goal was to enhance families' understanding of ADHD and provide them with practical tools to help their child thrive at home and in school. The recorded session has been posted on the public website [here](#).

Summer Transition Program for Students with Special Education Needs

- Students with special education needs have a range of physical, emotional, social, health, safety, and academic needs that should be considered as they transition back to school. For these students, structure and routine are often critical components to learning.
- Through Ministry funding, elementary and secondary schools were invited to participate in the Summer Transition Program to support a smooth transition back to school. Programs will focus on establishing relationships, encouraging familiarity with schools and reviewing/practicing routines. In the Fall, we will provide a synopsis of the various programs offered.

PA Day Professional Learning Sessions for Support Staff

- On June 6, 2025, Special Education and Inclusion staff from the Special Equipment Amount (SEA), Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), and Behaviour, Prevention and Intervention (BPI) Teams presented a variety of interactive professional learning sessions for support staff on topics such as *Tier 1 Strategies in the Kindergarten Classroom*; *Structuring Unstructured Time*; *Supporting Co-regulation and Emotional Well-Being in Students*; *ABC Data Logs*; *Welcome Chat with OT/PT*; *ASD ISP and MID ISP Question and Answer session*; *Sensory and Self-Regulation Part 1: Theory*.
- These hands-on learning sessions provided an opportunity for support staff to further develop their skills and explore effective inclusionary practices to implement accommodations in classrooms that incorporate Universal Design for Learning (UDL) and Differentiated Instruction (DI). Participants deepened their understanding of the intersection of anti-ableism, anti-oppression and anti-racism and discussed ways in which students can effectively be integrated and supported.

BE THE CHANGE Project Showcase

- On May 29, 2025, students and educators came together to celebrate their work in promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion and effecting positive change in school communities. The Be The Change project, led by Special Education and Inclusion's Occupational Therapy and Physiotherapy Services, involved 11 schools this year. There were 3 virtual learning modules teaching students about neurodiversity, inclusion, equity, allyship and activism. This project continues to amplify student voice, inclusion, compassion, identity-affirmation, and pride within schools and has been greatly successful in bolstering cohesiveness in school communities.
- At Cedar Drive Junior Public School, the "Be the Change" initiative is empowering students to lead through empathy, inclusion and meaningful connection. "Be the Change" is a central project, led by TDSB's Occupational Therapy and Physiotherapy Services' team.
- Grade 6 students at Cedar Drive have been actively engaging with the Primary Developmental Disabilities (DD) class through shared experiences like a dance workshop and outdoor learning sessions. These interactions are fostering friendships, promoting teamwork and helping students better support one another. Inspired by these connections, many Grade 6 students have taken on the role of Recess Buddies.

The Friendship Community - Pilot Project

- “The Friendship Community” is a ministry-funded project led by TDSB’s Occupational Therapy and Physiotherapy (OT/PT) Services focusing on fostering relationships, understanding, and compassion of neurotypical and neurodivergent youth in regular stream programming. An eight-session module was created and is being delivered to students at four pilot schools from grades 1-6.
- These modules focus on affirming neurodiversity, relationship building, and anti-bullying and allyship. Participating students interactively engage in problem-solving and team-building activities to build understanding, compassion, and relationship with one another.
- Upon completion of the pilot project and receipt of feedback from students, staff, and administrators, the modules will be adjusted accordingly. Should another ministry grant be funded next year, this project will be offered to more TDSB schools along with plans to integrate this as professional learning for educators.

Supporting Transition to High School: Secondary Congregated Sites

- Professional Support Services (PSS) received mental health and well being funds which were used to support transitions for students with disabilities in 23 secondary congregated and integrated schools with schools with Developmental Disability (DD) and Physical Disability (PD) Intensive Support Programs (ISPs).
- School staff, with the support of Child and Youth Services, Occupational Therapy/Physiotherapy Services, Psychology Services, Social Work Services, Speech-Language Pathology Services) arranged transition visits to September sites for incoming Grade 9 students and their parents/guardians/caregivers.
- During these visits, students and families were able to familiarize themselves with the school space, meet with staff, enjoy food and refreshments, receive valuable transition resources (e.g., visual social stories, sensory/motor transition items, etc.), and most importantly, initiate connections and relationships to foster smooth transitions with school staff. Currently enrolled high school students also provided school tours for their incoming peers.

Healthy Relationships & Anti-Sex Trafficking Initiative: The T.E.A.R. Program In Collaboration with TDSB Social Workers, Victim Services of Toronto and Montage Support Services

- Through a meaningful collaboration between school social workers, Montage Support Services, and Victim Services of Toronto, eight secondary congregated schools participated in a vital initiative under the TEAR (Teens Ending Abusive Relationships) Program to support students with Developmental Disabilities (DD) and Mild Intellectual Disabilities (MID).
- This initiative focused on fostering healthy relationships and raising awareness about the risks and realities of sex trafficking. As the program progressed, students took on co-leadership and leadership roles, actively continuing the conversations about healthy friendships, relationships, and recognizing unsafe situations. They also helped build peer knowledge and comfort around help-seeking behaviours, showing initiative in supporting one another and reinforcing a culture of care and safety.

Developmental Disabilities Virtual Connect (DDVC) 2024–2025

- The DDVC initiative offers a series of informative virtual sessions and a year-end in-person event which was held on May 3, 2025, all designed to support families of children, youth, and young adults with developmental disabilities.
- These events are led by Social Work Services in collaboration with Professional Support Services, Special Education and Inclusion and community partners. Each month features two virtual sessions, one in the morning and one in the evening, which are co-led by key community agencies and focused on providing community supports, autism services, funding and recreation, transition to adulthood, and long-term future planning for children and youth with developmental disabilities.

Community Parenting/Caregiver Connections

- Held at John Polanyi Collegiate Institute on May 3, 2025, this in-person event brought together over 300 families and featured 50+ agency booths, guest speakers, engaging activities, and resources to help families plan for summer.
- The event fostered a strong sense of community and support as many families attended with their children and engaged with staff and community partners.

National Deafblind Awareness Month

The month of June serves as a platform for raising awareness about the distinctive challenges encountered by individuals with an identified dual sensory loss. Deafblindness, a combination of sight and hearing loss to varying degrees, profoundly impacts communication, mobility, learning, and access to information. Those who are deafblind often rely on alternative communication methods, such as tactile sign language, braille, or assistive technology.

In Ontario, students are identified as deafblind when neither sense can fully compensate for the loss of the other, meaning that neither can be used as a primary means of learning. They have unique and complex needs, requiring services and supports which are different from those designed exclusively for individuals who are blind or have low vision, are Deaf or hard of hearing, or have multiple exceptionalities. When both vision and hearing challenges exist, attention and consideration must be given to both senses simultaneously. Environmental adaptations, positioning adjustments, and modifications in information delivery are needed.

To learn more about the local deafblind community, please visit [Deafblind Awareness Month | DBCS \(deafblindservices.ca\)](https://deafblindservices.ca).

IPRC Data - May 2025

May IPRCs	
Learning Centre 1	307
Learning Centre 2	423
Central	9
IPRCs Completed	739
IPRC Cumulative since August 2024	
IPRC Cumulative since August 2024	3230

Psychological Assessment Data - May 2025



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Psychological Services Assessment Statistics

May 2025

Month-By-Month	Total
Completed	301
Referrals	280

Cumulative (since September 2024)	
Completed	3124
In Progress	765
Removed	498
Waiting*	1012
Total Referrals**	5399

**94% of total waitlist are comprehensive/DK assessments, and 6% are gifted assessments*

***77% of total referrals are for comprehensive/DK assessments, and 23% are gifted assessments*